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THOUGHT AND ACTION.

I WANT once more to read to you these words from the eighth chapter of the Gospel of St. John :

“ As He spake these words, many believed on Him. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on Him, If ye continue in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed ; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. They answered Him, We be Abraham’s seed, and were never in bondage to any man : how sayest Thou, Ye shall be made free ? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever : but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”

There are two great regions in which the life of every true man resides. They are the region of action and the region of thought. It is impossible to separate these two regions from one

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There are two great regions in which the life of every true man resides. They are the region of action and the region of thought. It is impossible to separate these two regions from one

another and to bid one man live in one of them alone and the other man live only in the other of them. It is impossible to say to the business man that he shall live only in the region of action, it is impossible to say to the scholar that he shall live only in the region of thought, for thought and action make one complete and single life. Thought is not simply the sea upon which the world of action rests, but, like the air which pervades the whole solid substance of our globe, it permeates and fills it in every part. It is thought which gives to it its life. It is thought which makes the manifestation of itself in every different action of man. I hope we are not so deluded as men have been sometimes, as some men are to-day, that we shall try to separate these two lives from one another, and one man say, "Everything depends upon my action, and I care not what I think," or, as men have said, at least, in other times, "If I think right, it matters not how I act." But the right thought and the right action make one complete and single man.

Now we have been speaking, upon these Monday noons, with regard to the freedom of that highest life which is lived under the inspiration of Jesus Christ and which we call the Christian life. We have claimed that it is the highest of all lives because it is the freest of all lives, that

it is the freest of all lives because it is the highest, and it may be that we have thought that it was true with regard to the active life in which men live, it may be that we have somehow persuaded ourselves, that it has seemed to us as if there were evidence that a man who lived his life in the following of Jesus Christ was a free man in regard to his activity. But now there comes to us the other thought, and it is impossible for us to meet together as we have met together again and again here without asking with regard to the other region of man's life and how it is with man there, for there are a great many people, I believe, who think that while the Christian faith offers to man a noble sphere of action and sets free powers that would otherwise remain unchanged, yet when we come to the region of thought or belief, there it is inevitable that man should know himself, when he accepts the faith of Jesus Christ, it is inevitable that there the man should become less free than it has been thought that he was before the blessed Saviour was accepted as the Master and the ruler of his life. Men say to themselves and to one another, "Yes, I shall be freer to act, I shall be nobler in my action, but I shall certainly enchain mind and spirit, I shall certainly bind myself to think away from the rich freedom of thought in which I have been inclined to live." We make very

much of free thought in these days. Let us always remember that free thought means the opportunity to think, and not the opportunity not to think. We rejoice in the way in which our fathers came to this country and in their children perpetuated the purpose of their coming, in order that they might have freedom to worship God. Do we worship God? Simply to have attained freedom and not to use freedom for its true purpose, not to live within the world of freedom according to the life which is given to us there—that is to do dishonor to the freedom, to disown the purpose for which the freedom has been given to us. I want to speak to you then, while I may speak to-day, with regard to the freedom of the Christian thought.

I want to claim, that which I believe with all my soul, that he who lives in the faith of Jesus Christ lives in the freest action of his mental powers, and there sees before him and makes himself a part of the large world into which man shall enter, in which he has perfect liberty and can exercise his powers as he could never have exercised them without. It is not very strange to think that men should have sometimes come to think that the religion of Jesus Christ was a slavery that was laid upon the mind of man, because very often those who have been the disciples of that religion, those who have been the

preachers and exponents of that religion, have claimed just exactly that thing. They have seemed to say to themselves and to one another, to the world to which they speak, that man does give up the powers of his reason when he enters into the powers of his faith, when he enters into the great realm of faith. Led by some sort of influence, led by some heresy with regard to the capacity of man, or with regard to the dealing of God with man, or with regard to the purposes of man's life upon the earth, they have been content to say that man must give up the power of thought in order that he might enter into the Christian life and attain to all the purposes of the Christian discipline, they have been content to say that man must give up the noblest power of his nature in order to enter upon the highest life. Well might a man hesitate, hesitate whatever the blessings that were offered to him in the fulness of the Christian experience, if he were called upon to give up that which made the very centre and glory of his life, that which linked him most immediately to the God from whom he sprang. It would be as if in the storm the ship should cast over its engine in order to save its own life. The ship might be saved a little while from going down in the depths of despair, but it never would reach the port to which it had been bound ; it never would accom-

plish the purpose of the voyage upon which it had set forth. Let us put absolutely away from us all such thoughts. Let us come under the inspiration of Jesus Christ Himself, who says to us, in these words which we have repeatedly read to one another, that it is the truth that is to make us free, and that the entrance of the man therefore into that freedom is the largest freedom of every region of man's life.

I want to speak to you of the way in which my Master, Jesus Christ, appeals to the intelligence of man, of the way in which He comes to us in the noblest part of our nature, and claims us there for our true life within Himself. I would feel altogether wrong if I let you depart, if I allowed you to meet here with me week after week and say these words which I am privileged to speak to you unless I did thus claim that the Christian life is the largest life of the human intellect, that in it the noblest and central powers of man shall attain to their true liberty. It is given for us perhaps to ask ourselves for one moment why it is that man thinks, is ready to think, that he must give up the very noblest part of his life, his powers of thinking, in order that he may enter into Christianity. It seems to me that there are certain reasons for it which we can see; but how fallacious those reasons are! Is it not partly because man, when he is called upon

to live Jesus' life, when he is called upon to be a spiritual creature, immediately sees that he is entering into a new and different region from that in which his reason has always been exercised. He has been dealing with those things that belong to this earth, with the different duties and opportunities and pleasures that present themselves to him every day, and that higher and loftier region into which he has entered seems to have no capacity to call forth those powers which he has been using in this lower region. And then I think again there is upon the souls of men who deal with Christianity one great conviction which is very deep and strong. It is that the Christian religion cannot be absolutely that which it presents itself to human mankind as being, because it is so rich in the blessings that it offers, because it comes with such a large enjoyment to our human life, and opens such great opportunities for human living. Is it not because it seems to us too good to be true that we sometimes turn away from Christianity, and think that if we enter it at all we must enter it in the dark, that it cannot possibly appeal to these human natures and make them understand its truth, and let them take it into their intelligence that thence it may issue into the soul and become the guiding power of the life? Sometimes it seems as if Christianity

were so high that it was impossible that man should attain to it, as if it were something altogether beyond our human powers. Do you want me, a creature with this human body and this human relationship, with this body and with these perpetual bindings and connections with my fellow-men, do you want me to mount up and live among the stars and hold communion with the God of all? And if you want me to, is there any possibility of my doing it? Such a life is glorious, but not for me. It goes beyond any capacity that I possess. Ask yourselves, my friends, if something like this which I have tried to describe is not very often in your minds as you hear the magnificent invitations which Christ gives to the human soul to live its fullest life, to man to be his fullest being. There are, no doubt, other reasons which present themselves to men, and of those I do not speak. I will not think that the men who are listening here to me now, in a base and low way shrink from the evidence of Christianity and from the life of Christ because they do not want to enter into that religion because it would make too great demands upon them in the sacrifices that they would be called upon to make. It is said sometimes, and I doubt not that it is sometimes true, that men will not see the power and truth of Christianity because they do not want to see it. It seems to

me that the other is also often true, and it is that upon which we would much rather dwell. Men sometimes hesitate at Christianity and tremble, and will not enter into the great region that is open to them, because they do not want it so intimately. The critical, the sceptical disposition is very often born just of man's perception of the glory of the life that is offered to him, and of the intense desire that is at the bottom of his soul to enter into that life. Who is the man that criticises the ship most carefully as she lies at the wharf, that will see what capacity she has for the great voyage that she has set before her? Is he the man who means to linger carelessly upon the bank and never sail away, or the man who is obliged, if she can sail across the ocean, to go with her? Just in proportion to the depth of interest with which we look upon all Christian truth we must be deep questioners with regard to the truth of that truth. We must search into all its evidence. We must try to understand how it commends itself to all our minds. But first of all we want to know certainly what Christianity is, if it is able to deal with the thing with which we are puzzling or never to give an intelligent definition of it.

How is it now? I go to a certain man and ask him, "Why do you not believe in Christianity?" and he says, "It is incredible. I can-

not believe in it." "What is it that you cannot believe in?" and then he takes forsooth some little point of Christian doctrine, some speculation of some Christian teacher, some dogma of some Christian church, and says, "That is incredible," : if that were Christianity. Over and over again men are telling that they do not believe in Christianity, when the real thing that they do not believe in is something that is no essential part of Christian faith whatsoever. They never have given to themselves a real definition of what the Christ and the Christianity in which they are called upon to believe, into which they are invited to enter, really is. The lecturer goes up and down the land and in the face of mighty audiences he denounces Christianity. He declares it to be unintelligible and absurd, to be monstrous and brutal. And when you ask what it is that he is thus denouncing, what it is that he is thus convicting over and over again, you find that it is something not simply which makes no part of Christianity, but which is absolutely hostile to the spirit of Christianity itself. Many and many a sceptical lecturer is denouncing that which Christian men would, with all their hearts, denounce; is declaring that to be untrue which no true Christian thinker really believes, that which is no real part of the great Christian faith, which is our glory.

Do not think when I speak thus, when I say that there are things attached to Christianity which men do not believe, that they do not believe in the great truth of Jesus, without them, which men denouncing think that they are denouncing the religion which is saving the world. Do not think that I am simply paring away our great Christian faith, and making it mean just as little as possible in order that men may accept it into their lives. I am coming to the heart and soul of it. I want to know, if my life is all bound up with this religion of Jesus Christ, I want to know intrinsically what that religion is. I will scatter a thousand things which in the devout thought of men have fastened themselves to it. It is but clearing the ship for action, the making it ready that it may do its work, the binding everything tight just before the storm comes on, for that is just the moment when nothing essential to the ship itself must be cast away, when I make sure, if I can, that every plank and timber, that every iron and brass is in its true place and ready for the strain that may be put upon it.

But what, then, is the Christian religion? It is the simple following of the divine person, Jesus Christ, who, entering into our humanity, has made evident two things — the love of God for that humanity, and the power of that humanity to answer to the love of God. The one thing

that the eye of the Christian sees and never can lose is that majestic, simple figure, great in its simplicity, in its innocence, in its purity and in its unworldliness, that walked once on this earth and that walks forever through the lives of men, showing Himself to human kind, manifest in human kind. The power to receive it, the divine life wakened in every child of man by the divine life manifested in Jesus Christ. That is the great Christian faith, and the man becomes a Christian in his belief when he assures himself that that manifestation of the divine life has been made and is perpetually being made, and he answers to that appeal of the Christ. He manifests his belief in action when he gives himself to the education and the guiding of that Christ, that in him there may be awakened the life of divinity, which is his true human life. Is it not glorious, this absolute simplicity of the Christian faith? It is not primarily a truth; it is a person, it is He who walked in Galilee and Judea, who sat in the houses of mankind, who hung upon the cross, in order that He might perfectly manifest how God could live and how man could suffer in the obedience to the life of God, and then sent forth out of that inspiration and said, "Lo, I am with you always, doing this very thing, being this very Saviour, even to the end of the world." That which the Christian

man believes to-day as a Christian, whatever else he may believe in his private speculation, in his personal opinion, is this: The life of God manifest in Jesus of Nazareth, and thenceforth going out into the world wakening the divine capacity in every man.

You say, "How can a man believe that? What evidence is there of it?" The personal evidence of Jesus Christ himself. It is the self testimony of Christ that makes the assurance of the Christian faith. Does that sound to you all unreasonable? Do you turn here in your pew or in your aisle and say, "After all, it is the old story which I have tested and know to be untrue." Suppose yourself back there in Jerusalem. Suppose the self testimony came to you from the very person of Jesus Christ. Suppose the words that He absolutely said and the deeds that He absolutely did bore to you a testimony that some greater than a human life was there, and that then, as you pressed close to Him and became a part of His life, you found your own life awakened and became a nobler man, ashamed to sin, aspiring after holiness, thinking noble thoughts, lifting yourself not above the earth, but lifting yourself with the whole great earth, which then is taken up into the presence of God and made sacred through and through. I know no man in whom I trust except by the personal

evidence that he bears to me of himself. I know no man's nature finally but by that testimony which the nature gives me of him. Bring me all evidence that the man is trustworthy, and then when I am convinced I will go and stand in the presence of that man himself, and he shall tell me. So the world stood, so the world stands to-day in the presence of Jesus Christ. His presence on earth is an historic fact. The words that He spoke are written down in a true record. The deeds that He did are the history of the manifestations of His character, and the story of His christendom is the continued manifestation of His life, the divine life in the life of man, made divine through Him. Now, a question that comes in the Christian's mind is "Why don't people believe this?" Why should they not? Is it not written in the historical record? Has it not manifested itself in the experience of mankind? If it has, surely then it appeals to man's reason, and is not merely the act of the blind, stupid thing which we call faith, but it is the noblest action of that hour in which I believe, in the heavens above me and in the earth under my feet, in the brother with whom I have to do in the long course of history, in the total humanity which has grandly lived. The reason that men do not believe it is that of course there seems to be to them some strange and previous

presumption with regard to it, something which makes the story incredible. They say it is the supernatural in it, that it goes beyond the ordinary experience of man. Ah! it seems also strange to me, the ordinary experience of man. Who dares to dream that human life has lived its completest and shown the noblest power of receiving God into itself? Who dares to think that these few thousand years have exhausted this majestic and mysterious being that we call man? Who dares to think of his own life that, in these few thirty, forty, fifty years that he has lived, he has known and shown all that God can do in and for him? Who dares to say that it is impossible, that it is improbable, that he who is the child of God shall receive some newer and closer access to his father, that there shall come some new revelation which shall be written not in a book, not upon the skies, not in the history of human kind, not on the rocks under our feet, but here in our human flesh, that there shall be an incarnation, that the God who is perpetually trying to manifest Himself to human kind should find at last, should take at last the most exquisite, the most sensitive, the most perfect, the most divine of all material on which to write His message, and in that human nature show at once what God was and what man is? Until there be some exhaustive sight of human nature

as that, it is in no wise improbable that there would be that which outgoes our observation, that once in the long music of our human life the great key-note of humanity shall be struck, that once in our great groping after the God who made us He shall seem to draw the veil aside, nay, more than that, shall come and like the sunlight crowd Himself through every cloud until He takes possession of our humanity.

"Ay," but you say, "those miracles in the life of Jesus Christ, how strange those are; how strange that He should have touched the water and the water become wine; how strange that He should have called to the dead man and he should have come forth from the tomb; how strange that He should have spoken to the waters and the storm grow still!" Ah, my friends, it seems to me that there again we are dishonoring nature as just before we did dishonor man. There again we are thinking that we have exhausted the capacity of this wondrous world in which we live. What is the glory of that world? That it answers to human kind. In the mystic tradition of the Book of Genesis it is told how, when God first made man, He set him master of this world and all its powers; and, ever since, the world has been answering to man, who is its master, and every message that comes back to him, every response that the

field makes to the farmer, or that the rock makes to the scientist, is but an assertion and the culmination and the fulfilment of that which God did back there. As man has been, so has the world responded to his touch and call. Suppose that to-morrow morning the perfect man should come, not the man simply of the twentieth century or of the twenty-first, who shall be greater in his humanity than we, but suppose the perfect man, the perfect man because the divine man, comes. I cannot dream that nature shall not have words to say and a response to make to him that it will not make to these poor hands of mine. I can do something with the rock and field, I can do something with the sea and sky. What shall he do who is to my humanity what the perfect is to the absolutely and dreadfully imperfect? What shall the divine man do? When Paul speaks in that great verse of his and tells us how the whole creation groaneth and travaileth waiting for the manifestation of the Son of God, the whole future history of human science, of man's knowledge and use of the world, is in his words. The world shall know man as fast as man shows himself, and when the Son of God shall be manifested, then the groaning and travailing creation shall set all its powers free, and with the knowledge with which it floods him and with the usages and service with which

it supplies him, it shall claim at last its glory as the servant, the obedient servant of man. The Son of man has come. You may at least suppose it if you do not believe it. And if He came to-morrow morning, would not this whole world lift itself up and answer Him? Who can say what the hills and valleys and trees and oceans and seas would have to say to Him who at last manifested that which the world had been waiting and groaning for, the manifestation, the complete manifestation, of the Son of God? That is the reason why I claim that miracles — I do not know that there have not been fastened upon the miraculous power of Jesus stories of things, thinking that they were done miraculously, which He did by what we choose in our ignorance to call the ordinary powers of nature — but I do know that the coming into the world must have been more to this world, that it would have been the most unnatural and incredible thing if the divine man coming here had been to the world and the world had been to him only what it is to us.

And now the question comes to each one of us — for I must hasten on — how shall a man get within the region of that which perhaps you recognize, which I do not see how you can help believing, how shall a man get within the region of that higher power and let it be the rule of his

life, let it manifest itself through him? How do you get within the power of any force, my friends? Here is Christ, a force if He is anything, not a spectacle, not a miracle, not a marvel, not wonderful to look at, but a force to feel. How do you get within the power of any force? You look out of your window, and men say the frost is freezing, and you see your neighbors wrapping their cloaks about them and going down the street as if they were cold. Men say that a storm is blowing, and you see them shelter themselves against the storm that blows. How will you make that storm a true thing for yourself? Go out into it. Let the frost smite your cheek, let the rain beat into your face, let the wind blow upon your back, and then you know by personal experience what you had known by your observation before. And so I say that only when a man puts himself where he can feel the power of the Christ, where it is possible for him, if there be a Christ, if Christ be all that the Christian religion claims that He is, only when a man puts himself where he needs and must have and must certainly feel that Christ, if there be a Christ, only then has he a right to disbelieve if the Christ be not there, only then has he a right to believe if the Christ find him there. And where is that? When a man takes up the highest duties, when he accepts the noblest life,

when he lays open his soul to the great exactions and obligations which belong to him in his spiritual nature, when he tries to be a pure man, a devoted man, a noble man, only then has he a chance to know that force which only then comes into its activity. Only when a man tries to live the divine life can the divine Christ manifest Himself to him. Therefore the true way for you to find Christ is not to go groping in a thousand books. It is not for you to try evidences about a thousand things that people have believed of Him, but it is for you to undertake so great a life, so devoted a life, so pure a life, so serviceable a life, that you cannot do it except by Christ, and then see whether Christ helps you. See whether there comes to you the certainty that you are a child of God, and the manifestation of the child of God becomes the most credible, the most certain thing to you in all of history.

It may have been that such moments have been in some of your lives. Think of the noblest moment that you ever passed, of the time when, lifted up to the heights of glory, or bowed down into the very depths of sorrow, every power that was in you was called forth to meet the exigency or to do the work. Think of the time when you stood upon the mountain top or plunged into the gulf. Remember that time — it may have been the death of your little child, it may have been

your own sickness, it may have been your failure in business, it may have been the moment of your complete success in business, when you were solemnized as the great shower of wealth poured down upon you, and you felt that now you really had some work for God to do in the world. Ah, look back to that moment and see if then it seemed so strange to you that God should come into the presence and person of His universe, of His children, and take possession of their life. We grow so easily to forget our noblest and most splendid times. It seems to me there is no maxim for a noble life like this: Count always your highest moments your truest moments. Believe that in the time when you were the greatest and most spiritual man, then you were your truest self. Men do just the other thing. They say it was "an exception, a derangement of my nature, an exultation, a frenzy, it was something that I must not expect again." How about the time when they plunged into baseness and made their soul like a dog's soul? They shudder at the thought of that because they think it would come again. Nay, nay, shudder if you will at the thought of that, but believe that the highest you ever have been you may be all the time, and vastly higher still if only the power of the Christ can occupy you and fill your life all the time.

I said that there were many things that people attached to Christianity that did not belong to Christianity. I know there are. It is impossible that a great system like the system of Christ, a great person like the great person of Christ, should be in the world, and men not have speculated and thought in regard to Him. Those are not Christianity. I want to-day, if I may do nothing else, to tell you absolutely how simple and single the Christian faith, the Christ, really is. It is not the inspiration of this book or any theory in regard to its inspiration. It is not the election of certain souls and the perdition of other souls. It is not the length of man's punishment, whether it is going to be forever and ever, or whether man is to go to his restoration. It is not even the constitution of the divine life, the great truth of the way in which God lives within His own nature. None of these are the essence of the Christian faith, but simply this: The testimony of the divine in man to the divine in man that lifts the man up and says: "For me to be brutal is unmanly; to be divine is to be my only true self." Why do I believe in God? If some man asked me, when on the street, I think I should have an answer to give him. I could give one great reason — two great reasons which are really but one great reason — why I believe in God. I believe in God, my

friends, I believe in God with all my soul, because this world is inexplicable without Him and explicable with Him, and because Jesus Christ believed in Him; and it was Jesus Christ that showed me that this world demanded God and was inexplicable without Him; that made certain every suspicion and dream that I had had before, and Jesus Christ believed in Him. Shall I go to the expert about chemistry or geology and ask him the truth with regard to the structure of the world and the meeting of its atoms and forces? And shall not I go to the spiritual expert, to him in whom the spiritual life of man has been clearest, and say, "O Christ, tell me what is the centre and source and end of all?" When he says, "God," shall I not believe Him?

It is impossible, as I have suggested to you again and again in what I have been saying, that a man can have his mind open to the receipt of the truth of a person unless he be a certain kind of man himself. I do not know but the basest and the wickedest man who lives may believe in the Copernican theory, or that two and two make four, yet I cannot help believing that if he were a better and truer man he would believe even those truths, outside of himself, of science and arithmetic, more fully and deeply. Men were not all astray in the first thing that they were seeking after, though they were woefully astray

in many things that they said about it, when they talked about faith and works. Faith enters in through the soul that does a noble deed, and in the coming in of that faith the higher deed becomes possible to him. Hear the words that Jesus said, words that our age must take to itself until it shall be wiser than it is to-day: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." Ponder those words, my friends. See how reasonable they are. See how important they are. See how they have the secret of your own life, of what it is to do, of what it is to be, forever and ever sealed up in them. These two things, I am sure, are true with regard to the method of belief — that no man can ever go forward to a higher belief until he is true to the faith which he already holds. Be the noblest man that your present faith, poor and weak and imperfect as it is, can make you to be. Live up to your present growth, your present faith. So, and so only, as you take the next straight step forward, as you stand strong where you are now, so only can you think the curtain will draw back and there will be revealed to you what lies beyond. And then live in your positives and not in your negatives. I am tired of asking man what his religious faith is and having him tell me what he don't believe.

He tells me that he don't believe in baptism or inspiration or in the trinity. If I asked a man where he was going and he told me he was not going to Washington, what could I know about where he was going? He would not go anywhere so long as he simply rested in that mere negative. Be done with saying what you don't believe, and find somewhere or other the truest, divinest thing to your soul that you do believe to-day, and work that out: work it out in all the action and consecration of the soul in the doing of your work. This I take to be the real freedom of Christian thought — when the man goes forward always into a fuller and fuller belief as he becomes obedient to that which he already holds.

But yet I know I have not touched the opinion, the feeling, nay, I will say the black prejudice that is upon many, many minds. "Ah, but you have bound yourself," you say. "You have given your assent to a certain creed, you believe certain dogmas. To put it as simply as you have put it to us this morning, you believe a certain person. I, I am free, I believe nothing, I can go wandering here and everywhere and disbelieve to my heart's content." Yes, I do believe something, and I thank God for it. But I deny with all my intelligence and soul the very idea that in believing that something I have shut

my soul to evidence. I am ready to hear any man living, any man living to-day who will prove to me that the Christ has never lived and that he is not the Lord of men. I will listen to any man who is in earnest and who is sincere. I will not listen to any trifier, caviller, who is merely trying to make a point and to get ahead of the poor arguments that I can use ; but let any fellow-man come to me with an earnest face, either of puzzled doubt, or of earnest and convinced unbelief, and say to me, "Are you not wrong ?" or "I believe that you are wrong," and I, of course, will talk to him. Do I want to believe anything that cannot be proved to be true, anything that my intelligence shall not receive ? Why should I believe it ? Shall I trust myself to the ship merely because I have refused to examine its timbers, when men tell me that it is unsound ? Shall I throw away my truthfulness simply for the sake of holding what I want, what I choose to call the truth ? It is not because it is safe, it is not because it is pleasant, it is because it seems to the Christian man to be true, that the Christian man believes in the presence, the life, the power of Jesus Christ. Therefore come, let me hear every one of you what you have to say. Let me see where that upon which my soul rests for its very life breaks down ; but, until I hear, I will go forward, strong in the assurance of that

which takes hold of all my life, convinces my reason, lays hold of my affections, enlarges my actions, and opens my whole being to the freedom of the child of God.

And why should not you, my friends, why should not you? I honor the sceptic, the faithful and devout sceptic, with all my soul. I am no scorner of the man who, without scorn, finds it impossible to accept that which to my soul seems to be the absolute truth. I will scorn only that which God scorns. He scorns the scorner, and only the scorning man is worthy of the scorn of human kind. But while I honor the sceptic, while I invite him to make manifest his scepticism, not merely for his sake but for my own, I will not hold, I cannot hold that he is living a larger life than the man whom the Christ invites to every noble duty, to every faithful fulfilment of himself. I will feel that he, perhaps by the necessity of his nature, perhaps by his circumstances, perhaps by something which came down to him from his ancestors, is shut in, is a contained and hampered and hindered man, and I will long for the day when he, lifting up his eyes, sees that Christ walking in the midst of humanity, and yet at the head of humanity, manifesting our human nature, but outgoing our human nature, glorifying our streets while He interprets our streets for the first time into their

full meaning, giving to our shops and houses a radiancy which they have expected and dreamed of, but never felt, and tempting us always into a deeper belief in Him, which, embodying itself in a completer consecration to the right and true, shall lead us on into the fulness which he fills. Can I, can you, have Christ in human history, Christ in the world, and live as if He were not here? Will you not give yourself to that of Him which you know to-day? Will you not at least lay hold of the very skirts of His garment and say, "I see that Thou art good, I see that Thou art true. Lead me into the goodness and truth which by communion and sympathy shall know Thee more. Lord, I believe. I believe just a little. Lord, I know that that must come which Thou hast said has come in Thee. I would enter into Thee, to see whether it has indeed come in Thee, and Thou shalt lead me, Thou shalt teach me. Lord, I believe. I have not grasped Thee. No man has grasped Thee. The man who says that he has grasped Thee proves thereby that he does not know Thee. I know that I have not grasped Thee, but I will follow Thee by doing righteousness, by serving truth, by knowing and acknowledging Thee until all of that shall become clear to me. I will follow Thee, and Thou shalt lead me into the glory which Thou Thyself abidest in. Lord, I believe,

Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief." The story of the present, the hope, the pure, certain hope of the future is in those great words: "Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief."

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